

Acton Historic District Commission
Meeting 9/13/2011
Minutes

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TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Meeting was opened at 7:30 by Chair, Kathy Acerbo-Bachman (KAB). Also present were Anita Rogers (AR), David Honn (DH), Ron Rose (RR), David Barrat (DB), Michaela Moran (MM) (7:40), and Mike Gowing (MG) BoS liaison. Also present Roland Bartl, Planning Director

7:30 No Citizens' concerns.

7:35 Minutes for Meeting of 7/12/2011, 7/26/2011, and 8/8/2011 were approved unanimously by consent.

7:45 570 Mass. Ave.: Attorney David Erickson of Erickson and Grabarak, Attorneys at Law appeared to present drawing of a proposed projecting sign to be hung outside of 570 Mass. Ave. West Acton. Sign is made of wood with black background, gray outline with "Law Offices" at the top of the sign and the telephone number at the bottom to be in white letters; "Erickson and Grabarak" next to graphic of scales of justice to be in gold. Sign to be mounted with flatiron mounting. After discussion it was moved by MM and seconded by DB to approve application #1131 for projecting sign at 570 Mass. Ave, Acton pending abutter notification with the following findings and conditions: The sign is subject to the jurisdiction of the HDC, sign to be constructed as drawn, made of wood, painted black with white and gold lettering where indicated, hanger to be similar to that shown in application but sturdy enough to safely support the sign; the sign to be hung so that the top of the sign is not obscured by the bottoms of the two bay windows on either side of 570 Mass. Ave. to ensure visibility. It is recommended that the numerals for the displayed telephone number be of an old style font that include certain numerals such as the "9"s go below the base line. That part of the application for a window sign was withdrawn.

8:00 OMR Application #1133 concerning a preexisting fence already in place and approved by the building department. Our function is to add our approval. DB Moved to approved the fence and AR seconded the motion. RR Noted that even under these circumstances it is emphasized that the applicant contact the HDC liaison for advisory comments concerning any new alterations required by the town building department between the date of application to HDC and date of approval so that and changes can be made so as to influence the outcome of the required changes. Math: Change happens. The building department required changes and we had no choice. Math: This was a subjective use of judgment. Vote to approve the fence as installed was unanimous.

Application #1128-B Windows as shown on new printouts dated 12/13/11 shown as Options A-D. Math: The first option shows double hung with 2 muntins applied to the upper windows. #2. The old windows had no muntins. Prefer to leave open as in the back of the building. This is more consistent on the second floor. AR Commenting on Option D; the 9/9 windows are too small. All the 9/9. 6/6 4/4 are too much. Either option A or B is preferred. Option C is best for a restaurant. KAB Option A Must balance. DH prefers Option A. RR The 2/2 emphasizes the verticality component. RR prefers Option A. Nicer. Math.

Trim in Option A first floor windows is wider. MM Like the verticality in Option A. DB Same. AR: Discussing casing. Modify Option A casing to match the second story windows. Motion by AR duly seconded to approve Option A windows for windows New muntins with the 2/2 pattern and on first floor with same casing as on the second floor. Have the upstairs casing be the same as the downstairs casing. Voted unanimously.

Awning to protect the doors at the Montessori School. AR Addition of the awning is acceptable. The awning is three feet deep and is fixed. The depth helpful to have the sign four visible graphic. This is not possible on the awning. It should be wide enough to catch the railing. Will be mounted on the flat and the side panels should align with the edges of the fascia. KAB No objection. DH No problem with the awning. RR Favors anything that contributes to the smaller scale elements. Okay with the awning. It should be deeper. MM Looking from the West elevation it looks nice. Should be wider to get the railing. Increase the depth to 42". DB Okay with awning as shown. AR Moves to approve the awning for the Montessori School with a 3' depth per the Zoning By-law. Width of the awning to run from the outside of the left casing to the outside of the right casing. Finding that the awning is a second sign. We are granting a special approval for the awning itself and not for other details such as color or lettering which will be determined in the application submitted by the tenant, Montessori School. Motion was seconded by RR and approved unanimously.

Pergola: AR, RR and MM visited the site with Mathias Rosenfeld, Michael Rosenfeld and Javier Ramirez on August 18, 2011. Agreed that sign# has two different options. Refer to drawing "Sign #1-A. Metal or copper roof with flat seams, external posts extending to curved sections under canopy. A second option shows posts terminating under canopy. AR Illuminated for stairway. OMR used to be there. Were some lights for directory sign used for canopy; minimal posts growing into something growing into roof. Ribs or not is not the issue. Lights, gentle illumination, are required for safety. OMR More of a solid roof, copper vs. painted metal without ribs.

KAB the design is not a good fit. Curves from the roof do not appear anywhere else. The sign is rectangular. It sticks out. Needs a vine. The curving sticks out. Needs a woody vine-attach to fence to smooth over. The streetscape is made up of rectangles. Math: The curves were inspired from the curved tops of the windows in the church's tiny windows. DH Make the pergola more garden-like by using a true arch. Keep the top of the curve the same, just start lower. This is frequently seen in Acton. Copper is a good choice for the roof. KAB Oaky if it had more of a true arch. RR Abstract elemental quality. Individual element smooth. Painted surface. Very good thing. Likes B. Adds richness. KAB Need more time before voting to approve or deny. Recommend that we extend this discussion to the next meeting to come to a consensus. Math to extend to 9/27. MM wants more time on Application #1128. AR Flat roof and arcs and gentle arch helpful. OMR Don't want flat roof. Who wants more time. MM, DH DB and KAB vote for more time. AR and RR do not need more time. OMR to have the 8-8:30 time slot on 9/27 with request for extension from OMR.

8:45 Sign updates: MM as representative to all sign meetings. Second sign session will be during an HDC meeting with all property owners. MM to answer questions at the meeting. Windows Signs: To be included for discussion; One Newbury Street window signs are regulated. Window lettering behind window and applied to glass. Two separate types of

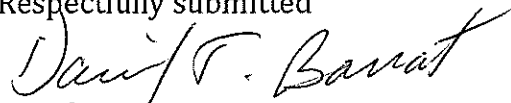
window signs. AR Okay with Window lettering. Behind window signs can be cluttering. Behind the glass window signs and window lettering are both types of window signs. Window signs painted on wood is cluttering. Physical plaque is very cluttered. DH These are unmanageably hard to regulate or control. Painted letters have historical precedent as do decals. We need to address this. KAB The issue of jurisdiction arises when addressing store hour signs or short term "sale" signs. Same for "open" "close" type signs. RR Agree that all signs need clarity, and simplicity for ease of enforcement. Painting opaque signs in windows defeats the purpose of windows and should be considered inappropriate. RB If a significant distance from a window it is not a window sign. MM The rule regarding window signs is to look and examine what purports to be a sign. External lettering is not prohibited. Beacon Placement uses external lettering, which is acceptable. Inside vs. outside requires guidance from town counsel. KAB We have two questions; if lettering is outside vs. inside is it within our jurisdiction. Do we take the position that any lettering is a window sign. MG Section 7/5/16 already deals with window signs.

9:00 554 Mass. Ave. Applicant was mistaken about the date of the meeting and will not attend. MM What he is doing change in window. Definitely a CnA . Problem is a question of external HVAC ducts that lead up external walls from an external heat pump unit. The application deals with two units. One on a rear facing side is hidden from Mass. Ave. The other unit requires ductwork that is visible from Mass. Ave. through a fence that doesn't hide it. This type of installation is reversible; it can at the option of the owner be removed if not wanted. Owner will try to make the piping look like a downspout. Needs to get rid of window air conditioner units. AC is not in our jurisdiction. Need guidelines. Owner could run the pipes through the attic. Would be unsightly. The pipes will not look like downspouts. We need to be wary of setting precedent. Owner referred us to Moodz who have this kind of hardware visible from Mass. Ave. We have until 11/7/11 to vote. Can it be put in the back of the house and not be visible from Mass. Ave. The building in questions is located at the corner of Mass. Ave. and Kinsley Circle. Need to confer with architect.

Train Station update: DH There was a meeting last Friday, September 9, 2011. There were a surprising number of people including State DPU Assistant, MCBR representative, and two from HNTB and town officials, twelve people in all. The town of Acton commands respect from its successful efforts with the South Acton Train Station. The proposed solution is to eliminate two parking spaces and put in a median strip between the two tracks. The meeting ended after 20 minutes' time. The town will reset the curb lines.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30

Respectfully submitted



David T. Barrat,
Secretary